



THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY RECYCLETTER



Fall 2010

Number 85

Program Update

Thank you for your continued time and dedication! Throughout the summer volunteers helped at numerous outreach events. Without your help the Division would not be able to accomplish so much! This fall we continue to participate in many outreach activities. I hope to see many returning volunteers and some new faces.

Many of you helped at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair in August. As a result of your hard work, we reached over 5,000 fair participants! Thank you to everyone that volunteered during the fair!

This fall we celebrated America Recycles Day during the weekend of November 13 - 14, 2010. Thanks to our volunteers who contributed 117 hours of their time to support these activities. The Division collected 28,620 pounds of confidential papers for shredding and recycling. An additional 700 pounds of cardboard boxes collected for recycling. A total of four box trucks were filled with donated reusable clothing and household goods to benefit community members in need.

Thank you for your ongoing support!



Ana Amigo

Inside This Issue

Recycling News	1
Frequently Asked Questions	1
Green Holiday	1
A Job Well Done!	2
Plastics 101	2-3
Upcoming Events	4

Frequently Asked Questions:

Do you take bubble-wrap manila envelopes in the paper recycling, or does the plastic content destine these envelopes to the trash?



The bubble-wrap manila envelopes are not recyclable due to the plastic bubble wrap. When shipping fragile materials, use paper as cushion. This way the paper can be recycled and no extra waste is created.

Green Holidays

Be creative with your gift wrap. Consider using old maps, comic strips, or even reusable fabric, such as a table cloth for gift wrap. People will not only find the idea interesting, but they will enjoy using the table cloth later.



Switch to using LED holiday lights. If you are in the market for new holiday lights, consider purchasing LED lights. Although the initial cost may be higher, an average user will save \$19 per year on energy costs by switching to LED lights.



Recycle your old holiday lights.

Visit www.montgomerycountymd.gov/recycling and click on "Recycle Your Holiday Lights" to find out how.

Give an experience instead of an item. Instead of giving items that may rarely be used, give tickets to the movies, tickets to an opera, tickets to a basketball game, or what about a day white water rafting? These experiences have very little packaging to dispose of and people will always remember the experience fondly.

Plastics 101

Recycling plastic containers can be a little tricky. Several times the staff at the Division of Solid Waste Services hold impromptu gatherings to determine if a specific plastic item is recyclable. Unfortunately, the answer is not always simple. To help you, below is additional information about the numbers on the bottom of plastic containers; what the numbers mean; what type of plastic containers to recycle; rules to remember when recycling plastic containers; and of course any exceptions to the rules.

What are the numbers on the bottom of plastic containers and what do they mean?

I'm sure everyone has noticed the miniature numbers printed on the bottom of plastic containers, usually accompanied by a recycling symbol. The numbers on the bottom of



plastic containers are called resin identification codes. The resin identification code tells you what type of plastic a container is made from. That's it, nothing more.



There are 7 resin identification codes. In addition to the numbers sometimes there are also even tinnier letters. Those letters are the abbreviations for the resin type.

Many times, I hear people say "If it has a number with a recycling symbol, then it can be recycled." Believe it or not, this is not the case. So what types of plastics can be recycled?

continue on page 3



A Job Well Done!

Once again, volunteers have done an outstanding job at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair. This year the weather was rainy and steamy, but through it all everyone was enthusiastic. At the Fair, staff and volunteers spoke to more than 5,000 fair participants! Forty-three volunteers donated three hundred hours of their time. Thank you for your hard work!



Volunteers educating residents during the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair at the Division of Solid Waste Services' informational booth
August 13 - August 21, 2010



continued from page 2

Bottles

Recycling plastic bottles is very simple! Recycle **all** plastic bottles regardless of the resin code. **Do not** recycle plastic bottles that held automotive products or hazardous materials such as motor oil, antifreeze, and pesticides.



Lids

Please recycle all of the caps and lids from bottles and containers. Just separate from the containers before placing the caps and lids in the recycling bin.

Plastic containers, jars, tubs, pails, buckets, and flower pots

This is where things get tricky. We will proceed with an in depth discussion about these type of containers and whether they are recyclable in Montgomery County based on their resin identification code. Unfortunately, not all plastics have a resin identification code. Any time there is a doubt, feel free to contact me.

Definitely recycle all plastic containers with the following resin identification codes:



Above: Samples of recyclable plastic containers.

So what about plastic containers with resin identification codes & ?

Plastic containers made from resins identification code (polyethylene terephthalate) or any type of (polystyrene and Styrofoam™ products) should be placed in the trash. Examples include, but are not limited to: plastic knives, forks, and spoons; 4-pack and 6-pack plant containers, plastic egg cartons, clamshell containers, packaging from small electronics and toys,

CD cases, etc. Remember, we recycle **all** plastic bottles regardless of the number. Only throw away and that are not bottles.

Generally, plastic containers made from resin identification code should be recycled. However, some items in this category of plastics include bio-based plastics. Bio-based plastics are not recyclable.

Why?

Bio-based plastics are not compatible with other plastic resins because plastics are made from crude oil and natural gas while bio-based plastics are made from corn. Plastics made from corn are made so that they biodegrade and are intended to be composted. However Montgomery County's composting facility can not accept plastics made from corn.

How would you know if a #7 plastic is recyclable or not?

On the plastic container, it will state "compostable."



So if you place plastic made from corn in with the recyclables, you are actually contaminating the recycling stream.

You can try to compost them at home, but the compost pile may not get hot enough to break-down the material quickly.

Did you Know?

- ❏ Plastics made in the U.S. are made primarily (70 percent) from domestic natural gas.
- ❏ Nearly eight out of every 10 bottles will end up in trash instead of being recycled. **Be sure to recycle all plastic bottles!**
- ❏ Producing new plastic products from recycled materials uses two-thirds less energy than is required to make products from raw (virgin) materials.
- ❏ Recycled plastic bottles make hundreds of everyday products, including fleece jackets, carpeting, and lumber for outdoor decking.

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION
DIVISION OF SOLID WASTE SERVICES
RECYCLING VOLUNTEER PROGRAM
101 Monroe Street, 6th Floor
Rockville, Maryland 20850

MONTGOMERY
COUNTY
RECYCLES



Return Service Requested

EVENTS CALENDAR

For more information about the events below, please contact the Recycling Volunteer Program at (240) 777-6445 or e-mail us at ana.arriaza@montgomerycountymd.gov.
All of our activities are approved Student Service Learning experiences.

Date	Time	Event	Location
December 12	12pm to 4pm	Electronics Recycling Drop-off	Bethesda
18	TBD	Adopt a Building by helping us post recycling posters in two high rise buildings	Silver Spring

We will keep you updated as more events get added to the calendar!

Don't forget to compost at home. This is the perfect time of year to get started!



Printed on recycled and recyclable paper